

TOWN MEETING



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"THE CHURCHES' ROLE IN AN ELECTION YEAR"

Speakers:

REP. CLIFFORD R. HOPE

REP. WALTER H. JUDD

DR. CHARLES J. TURCK

DR. WILLIAM LEE MILLER

Moderator:

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BULLETIN OF AMERICA'S TOWN MEETING OF THE AIR

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ANNOUNCER: AMERICA'S TOWN MEETING OF THE AIR comes to you tonight from the Academy of Music in Philadelphia, where the 168th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America is in session. At this Assembly, Presbyterians will celebrate the 250th anniversary of the meeting of the first presbytery held in Philadelphia, and will carry forward their long tradition of religious freedom and political liberty begun in colonial America.

This concern for freedom lies in the Presbyterian belief that man is directly responsible to the Supreme Lord and Creator of the universe and dares not disobey God to conform to any earthly ruler.

A Presbyterian Divine, John Witherspoon, was the only clergyman to sign the Declaration of Independence. So effective was his leadership in the American Revolution and as a member of the Continental Congress that King George III of England referred to the revolt of the colonies as "The Presbyterian Rebellion."

The Presbyterian Church today continues to work for freedom, justice and human rights in this election year.

Now to preside as moderator of our discussion, here is Gunnar Back, Director of News and Special Events for WFIL, Radio and Television. Mr. Back!

MR. BACK: Good evening friends. First, let me say, on behalf of everyone associated with TOWN MEETING, we want to thank the General Federation of Women's Clubs which have awarded a citation to this program for the promotion of individual responsibility. It is recognition such as this which is an inspiration to all of us who have worked on TOWN MEETING through the years and we regret that the termination of these broadcasts makes it impossible for us to continue the service which has been acknowledged by so many organizations and listeners. We hope you will send us your suggestions for the final TOWN MEETING on June 24.

Tonight in the Academy of Music in Philadelphia, TOWN MEETING is a feature of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. It was just a year ago that I had the pleasure of presiding over a debate like the one we're to have tonight -- and I hope it will be a debate as well as a discussion. We were in Los Angeles, at last year's General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. Our audience then, as it is tonight, was made up of Presbyterians from all over the United States, and from some parts of the world. Our subject was pretty much that of tonight, "The Churches' Role in an Election Year." As we went to the floor for questions for the speakers from the audience, perhaps some of you here tonight will remember, these were the questions that were asked by the church leaders. Perhaps they'll serve as well as anything for my brief introduction tonight:

How can churches so lack influence in government that they condone Jim Crow? That was one question. Why does the Church lack the moral courage to endorse candidates for political office whose social ideas are backed and believed in by the Church? Why does the Church at times speak out on issues in which it is difficult to find ethical or spiritual content, which is the Churches' chief concern?

Those were some of the questions a year ago, and they will probably come up tonight. As I said a year ago, the authority and prestige of religion is a very special thing -- people of differing political views find common allegiance to the Church. They are often disturbed if they think politics has walked into the Church and borrowed some of their prestige.

Churches feel, however, that they have the right and obligation to participate in the democratic process. How do they meet and how should they meet with the politicians who carry out that process? This is a matter for our speakers tonight, on tonight's subject: "The Churches' Role in an Election Year." There are two members of Congress to be heard tonight; a college president and an ordained Presbyterian minister, who is a writer for a liberal magazine.

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First, Representative Clifford R. Hope, Republican of Kansas, who was elected to Congress in 1926. He has been a member of the House Committee on Agriculture since that time, and was a member of the U. S. Delegation of the Food and Agriculture Organization at meetings in Quebec, Copenhagen, Washington and Rome. In '48 and '49 and in '52, Representative Hope was the Congressional Adviser to the U.S. Delegation to the Inter-American Wheat Conference. Welcome to TOWN MEETING tonight, Representative Clifford Hope!

REP. HOPE: We live in a nation where Church and State are entirely separate, but this fact was never intended to mean that Christian citizens should not actively participate in political life, or that the Church should not afford leadership in that field. Indeed, throughout our history, our political leaders and statesmen have emphasized the need for Christian citizenship.

It seems obvious that Christian citizens can be helped to do their full duty by such leadership as the Church can afford. That leadership should not be limited to election years or election activities because it must necessarily deal with legislation and governmental policies between elections and nationally these activities go on continuously.

Churches have always taken leadership on moral questions since the beginning of our history. More recently, as our economy has become more complex, they have taken an interest in social and economic questions, many of which are increasingly involved in government and politics. Now that the world has shrunk and nations are drawn closer, our governmental activities have increasingly turned to international affairs. The most important question in the world today is peace and where can the Church exert its moral leadership to any better advantage than in this field?

International affairs are nothing new for the Church, because Churches, through their missionary efforts were our first internationalists. Long before the League of Nations or the United Nations were ever heard of, Christian missionaries were bringing civilization to backward countries, building good will for the United States and developing better international relations. Until there is a general acceptance of Christian principles throughout the world, there cannot be a stable basis for an international peace.

What can the Church do to strengthen and develop Christian citizenship in this country? Obviously, a church in the United States can't tell its members how to vote; obviously it shouldn't do so. It cannot, as a church, back candidates or political parties in an election, but it can assume and assert leadership on matters involving moral and ethical principles, both in domestic and foreign affairs.

One thing we must have is a better informed Christian citizenry. The Church can do much in presenting the great issues of these times to its people. Religious magazines like our own "Presbyterian Life" can help with the job. I like the weekly information service furnished by the National Council of Churches. Let there be the fullest discussion of public questions in meetings like this general assembly, as well as in our churches and presbyteries. If the Church takes a position, let it make its reasons therefor fully available to its members.

The questions which confront those who have the responsibilities of running our government today are stupendous. Decisions affecting war and peace, inflation, taxation, labor and management, agriculture, and many other social and economic matters are of everyday concern and yet, under our form of government, they must, in the end, be decided by you the people, because the President and the Congress are your creatures. How big then is your responsibility? How can it ever be met without enlightened, dedicated Christian leadership?

MR. BACK: Thank you, Congressman Hope. We turn now to another member of the House of Representatives, Representative Walter H. Judd, Republican of Minnesota, who has been a member of the House since 1942. He served as medical missionary and hospital superintendent in China from 1925 to 1931; and from 1934 to 1938 was a member of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Welcome to you, Walter Judd, to TOWN MEETING.

REP. JUDD: It is said by everybody that of course we have complete separation of Church and State in the United States, and that's true. But why did our forefathers insist upon that, and why must we maintain it? I think it is because of the simple fact that if Church and State are not separate, whichever one is dominant always tries to use the other for its own purposes. The State seeks to use religion to sanction and support whatever the State does; or the Church seeks to use the State to sanction and support whatever the Church believes or does.

Well, if it is not the business of the Christian Church or its agencies to try to run the State, what is its business in the political field? Surely the business of the Christian Church in the political field is, first, to try to discover and declare the mind and the will of God -- what is righteous. Second, to recruit into its fellowship men and women whom it instructs in what it believes to be the mind and will of God -- His principles, His right relations between groups and individuals. And third, its business is to challenge and to inspire Christian men and women to take those principles into every walk of life, including politics, and put them into practice.

Government today is the single most powerful factor affecting the lives of most of our citizens. It reaches into our businesses, our schools; it reaches into our pockets to take our earnings; it reaches into our homes to take our boys. What kind of government we are to have is determined in this country by politics. Well, if government is the most powerful thing and it is determined by politics, then surely there can be few, if any, things more important for Christian citizens to be doing than to be working in politics -- seeking to apply God's principles in government.

How can the Church do that? Too often, I believe, the Church or I should say some church leaders, have sought to get what they believe to be the right kind of governmental action, not by challenging and inspiring Christian men and women to work as citizens through channels such as the ballot box and running for office; but they've tried rather to achieve these ends by official pronouncements, or statements before Congressional committees; or telegrams from church agencies as pressure groups, to induce officials who did not take office for Christian reasons to vote and act as if they had taken office for Christian reasons.

Of course, the Church ought to try to get all office-holders, along with every other human being, to become Christians; but, in my view, its primary work and its more important task with respect to government is to get Christians to become office-holders. How do you get Christians into public office? Christian men and women to do so must work in politics. That means that the Church should encourage and help every Christian in its membership, especially in an election year, to (1) study issues and candidates in order to be sure of the facts; (2) to come to conclusions in the light of Christian principles and values, Christian ends and Christian means; (3) to join the political party which the individual thinks is nearest right on the most important issues, and then to work within that party to strengthen its position where he believes it is right or change it where he believes it to be wrong; (4) to participate in the machinery of that party, to help select good candidates -- able men and women with sound Christian convictions and courage; (5) to help elect such candidates by himself voting for them and persuading others to do likewise, and (6) to be willing to become a candidate for public office and to serve in public positions as a Christian ministry, in order to strive in such positions for governmental action that will contribute to solutions of our political, military, economic and social problems.

In short, I am against direct political action by the Christian Church or its agencies. I am for direct political action by its members. As someone has put it, the primary role of the Church in an election year is not to try to speak for its members, but to speak to them. The proper role of the Church is not to try to change government by lobbying in Washington, or by issuing statements on what the government should or should not do, rather, as I see it, its real work is to change men and women in order that they, individually and as groups, may change society and government. The longer I am in public life, the more convinced I am that the best way to make the Christian Gospel more effective in government, is not by public pronouncements and pressures by Church bodies, but by persuading Christian men and women to become politicians.

MR. BACK: Thank you very much, Congressman Judd. Our third speaker is an educator. He is Dr. Charles J. Turck, President of Macalaster College. In 1936, Dr. Turck accepted the secretaryship of the Presbyterian Department of Social Education and Action. He left that post in 1939 to accept the call to Macalaster College. He has served as first president of the National Council of Presbyterian Men and as a member of the Executive Committee of the American Council on Education. Dr. Turck is an elder in the House of Hope Presbyterian Church in St. Paul. May we welcome you to our discussion tonight, Dr. Turck.

DR. TURCK: In my judgment, the role of the churches in an election year is about the same as it is in other years, except that it should be filled with greater caution so as not to cause division and misunderstanding or misinterpretation.

The Church has many functions as a religious body, but what we are discussing tonight is the particular function that it has in relation to the governmental, social and political problems of our time. In this area it seems to me the Church acts as an educator; it has a great educational task to perform to make the facts known concerning all these problems to its membership, and then to encourage its members to apply to these facts, to these problems, the principles of the Christian Gospel.

I want to give two examples. In the first place, take this issue of non-segregation, or the integration of all people into a community with special privileges for none and equal rights for all. We're to encourage the membership of the churches to get the facts and when the facts are known, North or South of the Mason Dixon Line, it will be a shame to those Christians who believe in a Christian democracy. With the facts known, then the task is to get the people to understand the relevancy of Christian Gospel to the facts. We know what that relevancy is. We know what the teachings of the Gospel are. God hath made of one blood all people to dwell on the face of the earth. We are brethern, one father, and all we are sons and daughters, the children of God.

Take the second illustration. The question of the use of force in various areas of life. First again, let us get the facts. How often is the threat of violence or violence itself the arbiter in industrial disputes? How often are the pressures of lowered income made the arguments to defeat some worthy tax purpose, some bond issue that might mean a better city, might mean better schools? How often do we seek to preserve in the international area the peace of the world by the use of force or the threat of force, so that we can coerce our enemies and our friends, rather than convince them?

With the facts known in this field likewise, the Church challenges its memberships to apply the teachings of Jesus. And we know again what He thought about force and violence. He was against these these things. "They that take the sword shall perish by the sword." A generation that has gone through two world wars and the Korean incident may well question how the abandonment of force would have been possible in those times, and certainly I do not think it would have been possible. Nevertheless, the cruelties and the costs of war are such that we cannot say that this was the Christian way and if we persist in the reliance on force for the solution of international wars and other disputes, we must recognize that we are walking in a way that is not Christian.

With the facts known and with the principles understood that are applicable, I still do not mean that the churches officially will pronounce for or against specific measures to achieve certain goals. Every church includes in its membership the members or at least two political parties, maybe more, and it is not worth risking the spiritual unity of the church by forcing votes or actions on local church, or on the denomination, as regards specific measures to achieve desired results. The Church is the educator, not the precinct captain. It helps to get people to get the facts, to understand the Christian Gospel as applied to those facts. It helps the individual to make up his mind and to act.

In short, if the Church helps its members to investigate and to think and to study and to come to a decision of his own as a Christian would, and not as a partisan zealot might, then it has performed its function in regard to these issues.

MR. BACK: Thank you, Dr. Turck. Dr. William Lee Miller is an ordained Presbyterian Minister and formerly was professor of religion at Smith College. He presently serves as staff writer for "Reporter" magazine, and has a series of articles entitled "The Christian and Political Decisions" which will appear in the July to September issues of "Crossroads." It gives me great pleasure now to introduce Dr. William Lee Miller.

DR. MILLER: I think the Church has a strange problem in this election year. It may have too many friends. Everybody is talking about moral and spiritual values in politics. Political leaders heap praise upon religion. Partisan officials are quick to come out in favor of the church, of God, and morality. Public documents are flavored with a new dose of religious language. Political activities are described as moral and spiritual crusades.

What's wrong with this? Well, first, I suggest there is too much of it and it becomes too thin. These religious references in a political context tend to become routine and to lose their power. It used to be traditional at the end of a political speech to make a passing obeisance to God. Now it comes earlier.

Secondly, and more importantly, the absolute and emotional loyalties of religion may become too much confused with the relative and shifting, the earth-bound loyalties of politics. One may even detect the hint that one party is more moral and religious than its opponent. The Christian people may be tempted, wrongly I think, to vote more on the basis of which group uses the word "moral" the most times. More unfortunately still, the morality that we talk about in this quick public way tends to be an individual morality, not a social one -- not one applicable to the larger problems of politics. It can deal with bribery, with hands in the till, but it is not very well equipped to deal with the larger problems of foreign policy and taxation, of slums and bombs.

What should the Church do in this situation? It should insist that Christian morality is not just doing good in relation to politics. Christian morality is not just whatever the community accepts. Rather, the Christian faith challenges what this community accepts, what we accept. It has a social and a critical dimension, an insistence upon justice. Christianity contrasts our society and our self-congratulatory assumption with another society, an elusive and ever-coming society to which it witnesses, the Kingdom of God.

The Church ought to try to introduce a larger dimension into our political life, not to answer the problems but to ask the questions that probe deeper than we ordinarily probe, to set the framework of the election on a larger stage than that we ordinarily see. How can it do this? One way is by the questions it asks us about our group interests. Two sets of Christian men take opposite positions on political issues and as you explore you will discover an interesting correlation with where they live, with their income level, with the particular groups with which they are associated. We need that kind of thought and self-awareness that sees that our positions are very much influenced in every case by all of us, who our parents were and where we were born and what our job and our income may be.

One way the Church can introduce a dimension is by this self-criticism. Another way is by trying to make us think. The current moralism may have a strong anti-intellectual strand in it. In this way it encourages us to believe that good intentions are enough but what the Christian does is to look simply for a set of moral values apart from the alertness with which he thinks about the way those values might be realized in politics. To understand a problem like segregation takes an effort of the mind. It's a matter of understanding a very complicated social structure and that alertness, that creative intelligence to understand a political problem is something the Church should bring to us, it should expose our laziness and perhaps even suggest reading that we do not now do.

The Church should provide a community in which we can afford to disagree with each other. The Church ought not to avoid the discussion of politics, it ought to welcome it. Why? Because in the Church we know that our disagreements are not final. They are set within a framework of a larger agreement. Each of us then knows before

God that his position is limited and partial and affected by his own sinfulness, and each position then needs to be checked and corrected by the position of others.

In this time, it seems to me, the Church should undercut a certain complacent and self-congratulatory mood, by saying that the compassion we have achieved is not enough, and that that compassion in a complicated world must be united with intelligence. To a society that tends to want to say "Look how religious we are, how spiritual as over against our Communist enemy," it must be the Church that sharply points out the inadequacies of even that measure of faith that we have achieved.

MR. BACK: Thank you, Dr. Miller. Congressman Hope, you haven't had a chance to talk for quite awhile. Can you begin a bit of an argument?

REP. HOPE: I don't think that there has been too much of a difference of opinion among the four of us here and I hadn't anticipated that there would be. I don't know that I want to take issue with anyone of those who have spoken. I rather agree with everything that has been said. I think that Representative Judd brought out some very good practical points and I am sure President Turck also developed some ideas here that will be of interest to all of us.

DR. MILLER: Dr. Turck, in his opening sentence, said that we should be, as a Church, especially cautious in an election year. I wonder if we might develop a little disagreement for our illumination there. It seems to me that caution is not, in this election year, the primary thing that the Church needs to develop. We're rather well supplied with caution on the whole, are we not? It seems to me that whereas we don't want the kind of superficial going out after candidates and snap judgment and issues and proclamations that are sometimes not thought through, nevertheless, the mood should not be one of caution but rather on an effort at depth, at a striving for creative intelligence, Christian intelligence in politics, rather than a wariness lest we might say something that would offend.

DR. TURCK: My feeling is, of course, about the Church and the local churches -- using the word in both senses. I think in the long run it is more important to preserve the integrity and unity of churches than any particular election or election year might be, and as a practical matter it seems to me that those who are most zealous for certain causes, and I am among them too, should guard themselves about getting the Church involved in some kind of political quarreling that will ultimately do the Church no good, whereas if the Church contents itself with a vigorous educational program, the membership of the churches can be relied on increasingly to make the application of the principle to the particular facts and probably to a particular campaign. I don't withdraw what I said as a practical measure of caution.

REP. JUDD: I think that perhaps we can distinguish to some extent between the clergy, in the sense of their having a prophetic voice, or at least they ought to have a prophetic voice, and the layman. I think the Christian Church must never lose its role of saying "Thus sayeth the Lord." I mean, we're convinced this is the thing that's right. I think the clergyman primarily ought to exercise that role in preaching to his own congregation. That's what he is set apart for. He has been given special training. Even if they don't agree with him, I think they expect him to be making them uncomfortable. That's the only way they go -- is by shaking them out of their lethargy and comfort. That's his business. But sometimes I think that the clergy, as a group, tend to go out and say, "This is the position of the Church," when they haven't yet got their own laymen to come along with them. They seem to think it is easier to get a bunch of Congressmen to go along with them than it is the people to whom they preach every Sunday. I don't think the clergy or national bodies and church bodies ought to be making pronouncements that agree with their prophetic insights, as if they were the more or less united judgment of the Church until they have been able to bring the layman, you and me, along to those positions. Then they can speak with authority. That's what I meant when I said the clergy should speak to the members and not try to speak for them.

DR. TURCK: Representative Judd twice referred to the matter of pronouncements and I would not like to be misunderstood as saying that I accept the idea that the Church should not make pronouncements. I believe in these pronouncements on basic

Christian principles for several reasons. One is that it helps to sensitize the Church to the issues that are in the world. Then it encourages lay people within the churches to make these studies and it helps to give the Church an influence as being somewhat in advance of the general public in pointing the way toward moral and social reforms. I believe in the process of pronouncements, but I believe it has to be preceded by, as is true in our own general assembly, a very careful study, by experts and staff members, as well as by the elected members of the assembly. When we get that, then I think we get something that represents the consensus of the Church on principles of Christ as applied to particular issues.

MR. BACK: Gentlemen, I would like to present to you a situation which I understand is drawn from real life. Perhaps you might all comment on it. An active Christian layman in the Middlewest had served a term in the State legislature. In his campaign for reelection he was bitterly and falsely attacked by his opponents. In a paid television program sponsored by his party, he asked a prominent minister in a nearby town to appear with him and state simply that he knew him to be a Christian and a gentleman. The minister was severely criticized by the officers of his church, however, for taking part in the telecast and taking what they regarded to be a partisan stand in a hot political battle. Now, were the officers justified in their criticism? Was the minister justified in his stand? How do you feel, Representative Judd?

REP. JUDD: It's hard to judge -- it's like a doctor making a diagnosis on a patient he hasn't seen yet -- and I was taught not to do that. But, in general, I think that if this clergyman thought that man had been wrong and his role was to say, "I know this man to be a good man," then I suppose it did help his candidacy to be sure, but I would think the clergyman did it primarily because it has his duty as a Christian man to try and correct a wrong that had been done. The fact that he happened to be a political candidate was incidental to the wrong or right of that situation, is my first diagnosis over the telephone.

DR. MILLER: We have so many groups in our society who, for one reason or another, cannot fully participate in politics, I'd hate to see the clergy completely included in that. So many people, because of the positions they hold, the organizations they represent, have to be -- again to use the word, very "cautious" in what they do. I'd like to see as much room as possible granted to the clergy. We can do that partly by assuming that when they take positions of this kind they may be wrong and we should say so when they are.

MR. BACK: Dr. Turck, I believe in your statement you said, and you agreed with Congressman Hope, that the Church does have a role of presenting the facts from the Christian standpoint. I think you went on to say that in the matter of integration, for example, if the facts are presented, it would shame anyone who believes in Christian democracy to -- did I understand you to say to believe in segregation after getting the facts?

DR. TURCK: Yes, that's right.

MR. BACK: How would you then think the Church could present the facts on integration in the South?

DR. TURCK: Well, I'm thinking of the lack of integration sometimes in a city like where I live, where the Negro population is by real estate practice more or less confined to a very small segment of the city and they can't move out from that area -- not by law, but by the agreement of the real estate people who won't sell to them. May I add that at the last General Assembly, the Presbyterian Church did indicate without exception or limitation of any kind that the churches of the Presbyterian denomination should be fully integrated.

DR. MILLER: Since we would agree upon that particular issue, I think, maybe we should say this one kind of self-critical word. It's a lot easier for us to confess the faults, the sins of another area, another segment of the world and of the Church and of the country than it is our own and it seems to me the Church has not sufficiently seen the role it can play in introducing a deeper political self-examination and deeper social self-awareness in its own constituency; that part of what happens in the Church sometimes, isn't it, is something like this. The opinions that everybody in a given

group would have held anyway, they now call, when they are in church, a Christian opinion -- without any examination, without any probing as to why we hold a particular position, what groups, what economic interests are involved. And a certain amount of awareness of our own sinful involvement is necessary in all Christian dealings of policy.

REP. JUDD: I've often thought of this same question in connection with Jesus, who lived in a time of slavery. He must have struggled with that, yet He issued no indictment of slavery as an institution so far as I've been able to find out, and He didn't appear before the government and demand that it be abolished by law or edict. Well, what did He do? He did what you said. He helped people see the value of a human being as a child of God and the disciple who once perceived that simply had to work from then on for the abolition of slavery which degraded a human being. And it was the spiritual impact that came from his Christian faith, and comes from Christian faith, which is the motivating force behind most of the great reforms in history. I think that is the level where the Church should make its primary attack, if you want to call it that, or its primary education, because once we see the Christian insight, then we have to do the political things to correct the things that are degrading or oppressing God's children.

DR. TURCK: There again I think that's a dangerous analogy. I would think that if Jesus walked on our streets today, He would advocate very direct and immediate handling of the problems of segregation.

REP. JUDD: I don't think that I am in conflict with you. What you said was to get the facts before people. I think that is what Jesus would do, get the facts before people and the facts would lead the individual to make his own decision. I must oppose this particular thing because it isn't worthy of the children of God.

REP. HOPE: Jesus didn't do that on every occasion. He drove the moneychangers out of the country. There were some situations in which he believed in more direct action and less theoretical considerations.

MR. BACK: I would like to introduce now the winner of the American Peoples Encyclopedia for this week. The prize-winning question comes from C. K. Warne of Berkeley, California and this is the question: "There have been cases where ministers have become active political candidates for public office. If this were done by any considerable number of ministers, what kind of modern reformation could we anticipate?"

DR. TURCK: I think that assumes that there might be a vast improvement and I wouldn't be too sure about that. There might be elements of divisiveness introduced by the very zeal with which persons held a particular explanation. I would say that the first thing that a minister would do when he decides to enter into active political life is to resign as pastor. I think, also, that the first thing that a college president should do when he enters political life is to resign as president. If he doesn't, he'll be asked to anyway. I have to speak a word for the independent in politics, not because they are any better than party people. They are not -- but there are some people who, by reason of their position which cannot ever be divorced from their institution; that they have to separate themselves from partisan action, otherwise, they will cease to be regarded as the spokesman of the institution. And in the case of the Church, I think it is particularly important that the minister should guard himself from losing that representative character. He loses it when he enters active politics.

REP. JUDD: What you are saying is that if he goes into politics actively, he should go in as a citizen, just the same as a layman or anybody else should go in. What I say is, "Come over into Macedonia and help us."

MR. BACK: Tonight we have an audience of some 2,000 people here in the Academy of Music attending the 168th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States -- people from all over the U.S.A. Now, we will turn to our audience and ask them for questions.

QUESTIONER: Dr. Miller, should not the Church be neutral to problems of politics and concern itself with the preaching of the Gospel, its real responsibility?

DR. MILLER: First, I don't think it can be neutral. Secondly, I think preaching the Gospel necessarily involves relating the impact of the Gospel to political

affairs. To save a man's soul, one needs to understand the total man, which includes the political man, the man in relation to the powers of the society in which he lives. Therefore, it seems to me a mistake for the Church to assume that it can make the separation that your question implies; that it can preach the Gospel and remain completely apart from the political issues in which people live.

QUESTIONER: Dr. Turck, do you think it is advisable for a minister to make known his political preference in private life, and where does that private life begin?

DR. TURCK: I don't think a minister gives up all privacy when he becomes a minister, and I don't see how he can be a normal friend in a group of friends without making enough comments about public issues so that people will suspect on which side of the political fence he happens to belong. I don't see anything wrong with that.

REP. JUDD: As I said earlier, when government reaches into everybody's life, every hour of every day, and if a minister's own religious convictions don't lead him to a point where he makes a choice, I don't know what he would have to say to his congregation. He certainly should not try to influence their votes directly, but what he preaches, it seems to me, would be bound to have an influence upon their thinking and then they figure it out with respect to individual candidates.

QUESTIONER: Representative Judd, do you believe that our seminaries should encourage those students who are so inclined to consider a career as Christian leaders in government service?

REP. JUDD: Yes, I most emphatically do, and I speak of it with some personal interest. I said in my remarks that I felt that we ought to recognize that a man could be called into public service as the ministry with the same depth of conviction and dedication as he is called to become a minister of the Gospel in the ordinary sense, or a foreign missionary or a secretary of a religious body or something of the sort. In fact, I don't think a Christian has any business being in politics unless it is to him a Christian ministry where he is trying his level best to put Christian principles into practice, just as much as when he was on the mission field in China or in a church in Philadelphia.

DR. MILLER: I agree with that, but I have a shocking comment to make. I hope it will be a little shocking. Our politics would not necessarily be made better by having Christians enter it, would it? Let's think about that as Christians, looking at ourselves. The assumption, if he all come over into Macedonia with Mr. Judd, depends upon other things, in addition to our allegiance to Christianity. It depends upon how deeply we have thought and related that Christianity to the political issues with which we deal. It is the assumption, sometimes, in the Church that if the Church members would just go out into dirty politics and troop down to the ward headquarters, if they can find it, and sign up, that immediately dirty politics would be made clean. Not necessarily. The Christian can be involved in the same problems of power that others are involved in and they would have the same problem of their self-interests that others have.

REP. JUDD: That's right. I don't disagree with that at all. A man should go in, not with the idea that he using some Christian words would mean that he would be wiser necessarily, but if he goes in as the way in which he can make his finest contribution to building the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, he ought to have a sense of his conscience. But he should never let his religious professions be a substitute for doing his homework. If I may say so, once in a while, I have been a little embarrassed on Congressional committees when some distinguished person came before us representing a religious body and in general terms sponsored specifically a piece of legislation and when the committee members asked him questions, it became clear, painfully, that he didn't know what was inside the bill. He took the label, the purpose clause, which was going to cure everything, and he didn't read the mechanism. And it is embarrassing to find that Christians, as I say, haven't done the work so that they knew what they were talking about in the same way that the fellow that came from the rotten political machine did.

QUESTIONER: Representative Hope, does the church body have any right to take a stand on a political issue when its members do not agree among themselves in the matter?

REP. HOPE: In the matter of right, I wouldn't say it didn't have a right. I certainly think it would be very inadvisable under those circumstances for a church to resist the division and the conflict that might come from taking a stand of that kind, but certainly the Church is like any other organization. In the Presbyterian Church, at least, the majority rules and I wouldn't say there was no right there to take that position. I think Dr. Turck has already mentioned the idea that we should be cautious on some of these matters because of the danger of division and the injury that it might do to the spiritual atmosphere of the Church.

REP. JUDD: And because it hasn't always been true that the majority was right from a Christian standpoint, in the long run.

DR. TURCK: I think the answer to that question, though, depends on what is the particular issue that is involved. Let me give just one illustration. I happen to be a great believer in the United Nations and I would say that Church announcements on behalf of continuous support of the United Nations as an instrument by which our national policies are achieved on the international field -- that that is a wise and effective pronouncement. It's the general consensus of Presbyterians, too. I hope I'm not misstating the facts when I say that. Nevertheless, I would recognize that that goes to the limit of support of what I call a specific measure or a specific instrument, because all these questions are so complicated that I think the primary emphasis should be on the educational process that precedes the making of the pronouncement. But I wouldn't emasculate all pronouncements by having no reference whatever to what's going on in the thinking of the church group.

QUESTIONER: Dr. Turck, let us take an example where the Church has made a pronouncement. The Presbyterian Church, for example, in the last General Assembly, the pronouncement regarding integration in our congregation. How can the Church, for example, now openly support a candidate for office on the basis of racial integration when so many of our congregations are not yet integrated?

DR. TURCK: The Church isn't going to support any candidate for public office, one way or the other, I take it -- the Church officially. Church members individually are going to take their stand and their decision will be based on the many complicated factors that are involved in the choice of a Presidential or other candidate.

QUESTIONER: We have, however, made a pronouncement on this particular issue, have we not?

DR. TURCK: Yes, but that doesn't say that's the only issue. Many of us may think it is the principal issue, but that again is for the individual to decide.

MR. BACK: Are you satisfied? Have you had an adequate answer?

QUESTIONER: Well, I guess each of us has a right to an opinion, I think.

QUESTIONER: Dr. Miller, in some parts of our country Negroes and other minority groups are denied equal opportunities to register and vote. What should the Church do in these situations?

DR. MILLER: It seems to me one of the areas the Church can speak with a real clarity about concrete issues is on the kind of issues that involve the structure and functioning of democracy itself -- the franchise, the right to vote, the nature of the appeals that the two parties make, the disproportionate representation of the different interests in the community in state legislatures. This kind of thing and most importantly, I think, the issue of the vote, the Negro vote in the South; this kind of issue it seems to me the Church can speak very directly on. There is a clear morality, a clear ethic underlying a position of the Church supporting democracy, the kind of thing we haven't done enough and ought to do more.

QUESTIONER: Congressman Judd, how may the Christian Church get the district, city, state and national committees to nominate Christians on the different tickets?

REP. JUDD: There isn't any way except for individuals Christians to start at the bottom in the political process. That's why I said that I don't quite see how a fellow can really count much if he doesn't work in politics. The foundation organization of our political system is the precinct caucus. There is where you elect somebody to go to the ward or the county, and there they elect delegates to go to the state conventions, and it is out of that political mechanism -- for better or worse, this is the one that controls -- it is out of or through that political mechanism

that alone we can get the committees and the parties to put up better candidates. I know it seems awfully frustrating and hopeless -- What can one person do -- well, look what Adolf Hitler did beginning as one; look what Karl Marx did beginning with one person; look what St. Paul did beginning with one person. I glory in the fact that in America we can do something, beginning with one person, about the things that we think ought to be changed. And that is the glorious thing about our country -- we can, but it's hard and we have to begin as individuals. That's the whole genius, in a sense, of our Christian faith, that one man's changed and he gets his ideas over to the next fellow and to the next fellow, and that's the way society grows, by gradual change. If we don't believe in that and make it work, then we get the Marxian concept which is that it grows by violent revolution.

DR. MILLER: Do we just want Christians to be nominated? Wouldn't there be cases where the Christian should vote for the person of Jewish or of no faith because of his political convictions, ultimately related to his Christian faith, rather than a Christian?

QUESTIONER: My thought is to get the fellow in there that will be a representative of the honest people of the community and of the state and of the nation. It would seem to me that the Christian would be the foremost person of all.

DR. MILLER: We have to be careful of our definition of "honest."

MR. BACK: Thank you, Dr. Miller. I am sorry that I have to terminate our discussion. Our thanks to Representative Hope and Representative Judd, to Dr. Charles Turck and to Rev. William Lee Miller, for their part in the discussion tonight.

Our thanks to the hosts for this TOWN MEETING, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, and especially to Dr. Clayton Griswold, Executive Director, Department of Radio and Television of the General Council; Dr. Clifford Earle, Secretary of the Department of Social Education and Action and Miss Margaret Kuhn.

Thanks also to the staff of Station WFIL.

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